

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 PC-15 DRC-01 /134 W

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R 272029Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1814

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 7714

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SOCI, BL

SUBJ: GOB RELEASES 73 POLITICAL PRISONERS

REF: LA PAZ 7473

1. ON DECEMBER 22, THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR ANNOUNCED THE RELEASE OF 73 POLITICAL PRISONERS AS PART OF A GOB CONTRIBUTION "TOWARD THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PACIFICATION OF THE NATION." THE MINISTER ADDED THAT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS TWELVE MORE POLITICAL PRISONERS WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO THE COURTS FOR TRIAL FOR COMMON CRIMES.

2. THE COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE AND TO A LESSER DEGREE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN LOBBYING FOR A GENERAL AMNESTY WERE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE GOB ACTION. THE COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE HAVE CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN THAT THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD BY THE GOB WAS OVER 300 IN NOVEMBER AND NOT THE 151 CLAIMED BY THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR (SEE REFTTEL) THEREFORE, THEY CLAIMED THE MINISTER RELEASED A FAR SMALLER PROPORTION OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS THAN HE WAS TRYING TO IMPLY. MORE IMPORTANT THE COMMISSION HAD BEEN SEEKING A FORMAL DECREE OF AMNESTY ON BEHALF OF THOSE IN CUSTODY RATHER THAN THEIR MERE RELEASE. AS IT IS, WHILE MOST OF THOSE RELEASED HAD NEVER BEEN FORMALLY CHARGED, NEITHER HAVE THEY BEEN FORMALLY CLEARED (AS WOULD BE

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THE CASE WITH A FORMAL AMNESTY) AND THEY MAY THEORETICALLY BE

REARRESTED AT ANY TIME.

3. DURING THE HOLIDAY WEEK IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE WAS MAKING ITSELF OBNOXIOUS TO THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR. ON DECEMBER 21, THE MINISTER NOTED THAT THE COMMISSION LACKED LEGAL STATUS (PERSONERIA JURIDICA) AND THAT IT HAD BETTER SEE TO ITS OWN RESPECT FOR THE LAWS OF THE LAND BEFORE CHARGING THE GOB WITH DISREGARD FOR THE LAW. ON DECEMBER 22, SELF-DESCRIBED EXECUTIVES OF THE "CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS OF THE LAY APOSTOLATE" TOOK ADS IN THE PRESS CONDEMNING THE COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE AS A SINECURE FOR FOREIGN PRIESTS PERMITTING THEM TO DABBLE IN POLITICS AND LIVE COMFORTABLY WHILE BOLIVIAN PRIESTS WERE EXCLUDED FROM AUTHORITY IN THEIR OWN CHURCH AND RECEIVED ONLY THE POOREST BENEFICIES. THE ARCHBISHOP OF LA PAZ DENOUCED THOSE WHO SIGNED THE DOCUMENT AS IMPOSTORS AND DEFENDED THE COMMISSION AND ITS WORK. MOST OBSERVERS ACCEPTED THE ADS AS AN EXCEPTIONALLY HEAVY-HANDED MANEUVER OF THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR.

4. COMMENT: ANY FAVORABLE IMPACT THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR MAY HAVE WISHED TO MAKE ON PUBLIC OPINION WITH THE RELEASE OF A PORTION OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS HAS BEEN DULLED BY THE CONSTANT CRITICISM OF THE COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE; NEVERTHELESS: IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT TENSION BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND THE COMMISSION AND INTEREST IN CIVIL LIBERTIES WILL SUBSIDE UNTIL THERE ARE NEW ARRESTS OR UNTIL THERE IS ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY (PERHAPS A RELIGIOUS FEAST OR NATIONAL HOLIDAY FOR THE COMMISSION TO ASK ONCE MORE FOR A GENERAL AMNESTY.  
STEDMAN

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** AMNESTY, POLITICAL PRISONERS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
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